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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 001225

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/12/2018

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SE WILLIAMSON'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR
DR. MUSTAFA OSMAN ISMAIL

REF: KHARTOUM 1215

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On August 12 White House Special Envoy for Sudan (SE) Richard Williamson met with Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail. He was accompanied by the CDA, State/L Christine Sanford, SE Staff Assistants and Poloff (notetaker.) SE Williamson began the meeting by expressing appreciation for the GNU's role in resolving the Abyei. Ismail said the Abyei Interim Administration would be established in the coming ten days. He agreed with SE Williamson on the need for a political solution to the longer-term border issue in Abyei, but claimed that the SPLM lacked the political will to do so. He noted that Abyei issues would also be addressed through a newly formed joint committee on Unity, Peace and Reconciliation co-chaired by himself and the SPLM's Pagan Amun. Regarding Darfur, Ismail claimed that within 72 hours a national conference would be announced and would issue a new roadmap for peace. He stated that the GOS is continuing to provide full cooperation on UNAMID, but argued that the GOS should be responsible for protecting humanitarian convoys until UNAMID is able to do so. He urged that any concerns about humanitarian access in Darfur ought to be brought to a trilateral committee comprised of the GOS, UN and AU. He blamed the UN for not coordinating meetings with the stakeholders. Ismail also stated the GOS is not interested in removing Chadian President Deby from power, but that improved relations between the two countries must come with a mechanism to halt cross-border rebel activity. Ismail also sought a clear answer from SE Williamson on the status of US-GOS bilateral talks. Williamson responded that he was encouraged by progress on Abyei, and as a result he would recommend a resumption of such talks to the President, stressing also that substantial, tangible action must be taken on Darfur. End Summary

Abyei

¶2. (C) SE Williamson described his recent visit to Abyei, (reftel) and observed that while the deadlines on the June 8 Abyei Roadmap had not been met, he was nonetheless encouraged by the sight of returnees and the overall progress to date. SE Williamson expressed reservations about the arbitration process at The Hague, and encouraged the NCP to seek a political solution to the border issue. Ismail agreed that a political solution was desirable, but claimed that the SPLM was resisting efforts to achieve one for fear that it would deem the findings of the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) irrelevant. Ismail said he came to this conclusion after the

SPLM had ignored his proposal to bring together several dozen Dinka and Misseriya leaders under the auspices of the United Nations to work towards a political solution, a proposal that had been accepted by then-UN Envoy Jan Pronk. Ismail stated that part of the problem was the lack of decisiveness by current SPLM leadership, noting that "Garang's style was to make a decision and then convince others," while Salva Kiir is content to wait for opinions to come to him. Ismail was glad to report, however, that the NCP and SPLM had succeeded in establishing a joint committee on Unity, Peace and Reconciliation, co-chaired by himself and Pagan Amun. He stated that while "we didn't put Abyei in the title," the committee was formed with Abyei in mind. He stated that members of the committee will travel to Abyei, and consult with a variety of stakeholders on how to achieve reconciliation.

Darfur

13. (C) SE Williamson said the primary concern of the USG in Darfur is the alleviation of human suffering, which must be achieved by increasing security and ultimately through finding a political settlement. Ismail stated that he fully agreed on the need for a political settlement in Darfur, as a military solution was impossible. However, he expressed frustration that non-signatories to the DPA had not been sanctioned as agreed to in Abuja, and that they had continually refused to negotiate or enforce ceasefires. He pointed out that the May 10 attack on Omdurman had occurred as mediators Salim Salim and Jan Eliasson were attempting to restart peace talks. Nevertheless, he said that President

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Bashir has called on all political parties and stakeholders, including armed rebel groups, to come up with a solution. He stated that "in 72 hours or less, a national conference will be announced to produce a road map for Darfur," although he was admittedly unsure whether rebel groups would attend. With regard to the new Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole, SE Williamson noted that the U.S. views his appointment as a positive development. SE Williamson continued that he hoped Bassole would bring renewed energy and a more industrious approach to peacemaking. Ismail replied that the GOS would definitely cooperate with Bassole's efforts, but cautioned that he hoped when Bassole arrived in Sudan on Aug 25, he "will be more oriented as to what's going on" than he was on his previous visit.

14. (C) SE Williamson stated that the USG continues to work for a rapid and full deployment of UNAMID to respond to areas of insecurity in Darfur. He acknowledged his extreme disappointment with UNAMID's performance to date, but was hopeful for improvements under new leadership, which he believed would exhibit increased creativity and flexibility in dealing with logistical challenges. SE Williamson also expressed concern about GOS conduct with respect to humanitarian access, noting that harassment of NGOs by the HAC has resumed, contrary to the progress made in April and May. Ismail replied that GOS position on UNAMID remained one of full cooperation, and added that "if there are problems on our side, we are ready to look into them." He noted that the best venue to air grievances about humanitarian access ought to be the trilateral committee composed by the GOS, UN and AU. He noted part of the committee's job would be precisely to report such problems. He expressed concern that this committee has failed to hold regular meetings and blamed the UN for this, adding that the UN does not have the capacity to deal with such issues. Along the same lines, Ismail noted that until UNAMID is in a position to defend itself, the GOS will continue to be responsible for its protection and that of humanitarian convoys. "That is certainly better than UNAMID troops being killed," he said.

Chad

¶16. (C) SE Williamson described his recent trip to N'djamena to meet with President Deby. He noted that he was frank with Deby in expressing his disapproval for Deby's support of rebels from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). In turn, he told Ismail that GOS support for Chadian rebels was equally unhelpful. Ismail responded that he fully agreed on the need to halt rebel activity in both countries, but that a strong supervisory mechanism was needed to ensure that cross border rebel activities cease. He further insisted that the GOS is not interested in a regime change in Chad. "We can live with President Deby" if he stops arming JEM, he said, and noted that the GOS was prepared to reopen its Embassy in N'Djamena. SE Williamson stated that USG welcomed the Dakar Agreement and the Libyan initiative to improve Sudanese-Chadian relations, but was ultimately agnostic about how progress was made.

Status of Bilateral Talks

¶17. (C) Ismail asked SE Williamson to clarify the status of bilateral talks between the USG and GOS. "I hope I can get a clear answer as to whether we should close the file or keep it open," he said, "and if the latter, then we need to know how, where, and when." Special Envoy Williamson responded that he met with President Bush on July 14 to discuss the status of the talks and other issues (referring to the ICC indictment against President Bashir). He noted that at that time, he and the President agreed that he should come back to Abyei and evaluate the progress made. SE Williamson stated that his analysis of Abyei generally was encouraging, and that his report to President Bush would reflect this. "Therefore," he stated, "I will also say that it is worthwhile to reinitiate bilateral discussions and pick up where we left off, to allow the GOS to recalibrate its relationship with the USG" and vice-versa. He observed that USG interests were driven by a deep desire to end humanitarian suffering, and that while steps laid out to solve the Darfur crisis were encouraging, they needed to be followed by concrete results on the ground. The CDA re-emphasized this point, and Ismail responded by

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sarcastically suggesting that the USG invite the NCP to Washington for talks, since "you've invited everyone else" from Sudan. "Maybe you should leave (the other parties) here so they can do their work" and solve Darfur, he said. SE Williamson concluded by saying that on issues of importance to the GOS (read: the ICC indictment) "no final decisions have been made," and that the next few months would be critical to informing the USG decision.

Comment

¶18. (C) In typical fashion, the glib Ismail was eager to point the finger at others (the SPLM, Darfur rebels) rather than assuming responsibility for actions the GOS can take to end crises that are of the regime's own making. The announcement of a roadmap and a national conference within the next 72 hours would be positive, but only if it includes specific details and commitments the government is willing to make, rather than platitudes about peace and security. The regime excels at process over results, and form over substance. Accordingly, this could very well be the latest version of the NCP's heretofore effective survival strategy.

¶19. (U) SE Williamson cleared this cable prior to transmission.
FERNANDEZ